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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: KMDR KPAO OPRC CI KN

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION - DISARMING NORTH KOREA'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM

¶1. On February 16, government-owned, editorially independent "La Nacion" (circ. 4,200) carried a column by international analyst Raul Sohr entitled, "Winds of Peace in North Korea." Quotes:

¶2. "Bad peace is worth more than a good war and that is what the west, led by the United States, has accomplished with North Korea.... For George Bush, the agreement with North Korea is bittersweet. For the right, headed by John Bolton...it sends the wrong signal in the sense that a country set on proliferation can expect to be compensated if it refrains from it. Bolton says this promotes extortion. The Democrats, although pleased with the agreement, accuse Bush of stubbornly abandoning the path begun by Bill Clinton, just to return to it but in worse conditions.

¶3. "But in the long term these differences will not matter. The Korean peninsula and a good part of Asia could be left outside the nuclear threat and, perhaps in a day not far from now, North Korea can join its neighbors and enjoy the economic bonanza they have been enjoying for some decades."

KELLY